



# DatelineERS

New ERS research and analysis at: [www.ers.usda.gov](http://www.ers.usda.gov)

Economic Research Service

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U.S. Department of Agriculture

ERS is the main source of research and analysis from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, providing timely information on economic and policy issues related to agriculture, food, the environment, and rural America.

## **Coming Soon...** **Food Consumption Data System** *Updated and Redesigned*

One of our most popular data products, the *Food Consumption (Per Capita) Data System*, will be updated and redesigned and will include data through 2003 for all commodities. You will be able to download spreadsheet data, or develop custom tables or charts using our tools online. Also, for the first time you will be able to access data on per capita servings, which can be compared with serving recommendations for the U.S. population.

Look for it in February at:

[www.ers.usda.gov/  
data/foodconsumption](http://www.ers.usda.gov/data/foodconsumption)

## **Commodity Markets and Trade**

ERS Outlook reports provide timely analysis of major commodity markets and trade, including special reports on hot topics. All reports, along with a calendar of future releases, are available at: [www.ers.usda.gov/  
publications/outlook](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/outlook)

## **Operating Costs of Grocery Stores Serving Low-Income Shoppers Examined**

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aer839](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aer839)

Stores serving low-income shoppers—stores with high Food Stamp redemption rates—differ in important ways from other stores. However, *Supermarket Characteristics and Operating Costs in Low-Income Areas* finds that overall, it does not cost more to operate supermarkets that serve low-income consumers. While stores with different rates of Food Stamp redemption have significantly different cost structures, their overall operating costs are essentially the same.



## **Deregulation and Devolution to States Has Affected All Areas of Rural Transportation**

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib795](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/aib795)

The booming economy of the mid- to late 1990s has placed strains on the domestic transportation infrastructure. Deregulation and expanded State and local responsibilities for surface transportation have affected all areas of rural transportation. The recent recession and heightened security concerns have disrupted air transportation and necessitated costly security provisions. *Rural Transportation at a Glance* provides the latest information on transportation in rural America. The effects of deregulation, devolution of Federal transportation responsibilities to the States, increased Federal funding, and heightened security concerns are discussed in the context of each of the individual modes of transportation.

## **Food Prices Affect Costs of State WIC Benefits**

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr41](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr41)

Food prices within States have a greater affect on average monthly costs of State WIC food benefits packages than variations in WIC caseload composition do. In addition, *Interstate Variation in WIC Food Package Costs: The Role of Food Prices, Caseload Composition, and Cost-Containment Practices* says that cost-containment practices by State WIC agencies provide different levels of cost savings in different areas, which also contributes to interstate variation in benefits package costs. This study is one of the few to examine the degree to which food prices, caseloads, and cost-containment practices influence costs of State WIC food benefits packages.

## **Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs Impact Nutrition and Health of Participants**

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19-3](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19-3)

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19-4](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr19-4)

*Effects of Food Assistance and Nutrition Programs on Nutrition and Health:*

*Volume 3, Literature Review* and *Volume*

*4, Executive Summary of the Literature Review* are the last two of four volumes

produced by a larger study (including *Volume 1, Research Design*; and *Volume 2, Data Sources*). Volume 3 is a comprehensive review of published research on

the impact of USDA's domestic food and nutrition assistance programs on participants' nutrition and health outcomes. The outcome measures reviewed include food expenditures, household nutrient availability, dietary intake, other measures of nutrition status, food security, birth outcomes, breastfeeding behaviors, immunization rates, use and cost of health care services, and selected nonhealth outcomes, such as academic achievement and school performance (children) and social isolation (elderly). Volume 4 is a summary of Volume 3.



## **Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Projects for 2002 Summarized**

[www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr43](http://www.ers.usda.gov/publications/fanrr43)

*Food Assistance and Nutrition Research Small Grants Program: Executive Summaries of 2003 Research Grants* includes summaries of the research projects that were awarded one-year grants in the summer and fall of 2002. The projects focus on food assistance and child well-being, food insecurity and hunger, the dynamics of food assistance program participation, obesity, and the role of community factors in dietary intake and food security. Some projects focus on specific populations, such as people living in the rural South and on American Indian reservations.

### **2005 USDA**

### **Agricultural Outlook Forum**

## **Science, Policy and Markets —**

## **What's Ahead?**

[www.usda.gov/ocel/forum](http://www.usda.gov/ocel/forum)

Sharpen your strategy at  
**USDA's Outlook Forum 2005.**

The Forum will be held  
**February 24-25** at the **Crystal Gateway Marriott Hotel in Arlington, Virginia**, minutes from Washington, D.C. The early registration rate of just \$265, is available until February 9.

Outlook sessions will feature USDA's first 2005 forecasts for planting, production, trade and prices, plus expert speakers on the latest issues for commodities, farm finance, and the food industry. Attendees will receive new USDA long-term commodity projections to 2014.

The science-agriculture connection will be featured. Focus sessions will include managing risks from BSE and Avian Influenza; prospects for energy prices, ethanol and co-products; early debate over the next Farm Bill; new dietary guidelines; and the future of the North American marketplace, WTO talks and the bio-safety protocol.

**You can register for the Forum and reserve a room at the Marriott online at:**

[www.usda.gov/ocel/forum](http://www.usda.gov/ocel/forum)

### **How to get more information . . .**

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